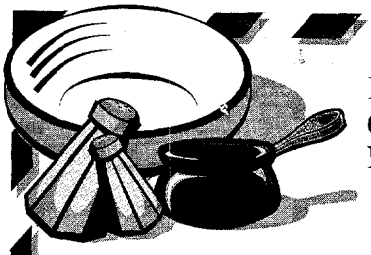


Fae J. Krokey
6452 Carsten Rd
Medina OH 44256-8589

1/10/00

Jane Henney MD

Doctor Henney,

I spent many years, as an RN, caring for patients who were suffering & dying from treatment resistant bacteria. This problem must be addressed. Please see enclosed article.

Sincerely
Fae J Krokey RN

99P-0485

America's Second Harvest
Ending Hunger
www.secondharvest.org

C2739

99P-0485 C2739

TAKE Action

PREVENT UNTREATABLE DISEASES

WHAT'S AT STAKE

The effectiveness of antibiotics in curing human disease.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

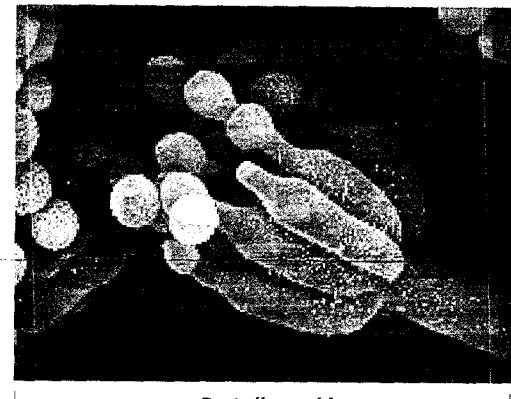
Urge the Food and Drug Administration to ban the use of human antibiotics to make livestock grow faster.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Many of the same drugs doctors use to treat illnesses such as food poisoning and staph infections are also used to raise pigs, chicken, and cattle for the kitchen. In animal factories, these same antibiotics aren't used just to treat sick livestock. They're also fed daily to healthy animals because producers believe that their animals grow quicker and reach slaughter weight sooner.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers the overuse of antibiotics in animal agriculture the principal cause of antibiotic resistance in food-borne bacteria like salmonella and campylobacter. By unnecessarily pumping huge quantities of antibiotics into healthy animals, producers are creating conditions where bacteria can quickly develop resistance to these drugs. When this happens—one strain of salmonella is now resistant to five antibiotics—doctors have fewer tools to combat human disease.

The European Union has already acted, banning all growth-promoting uses of antibiotics that have a role in human medicine. In June, the World Health Organization repeated its call for the "termination or rapid phasing out of the use of antimicrobials [which include antibiotics] for growth promotion if they are also used for treatment of humans."



Richard Edelman

Penicillin mold

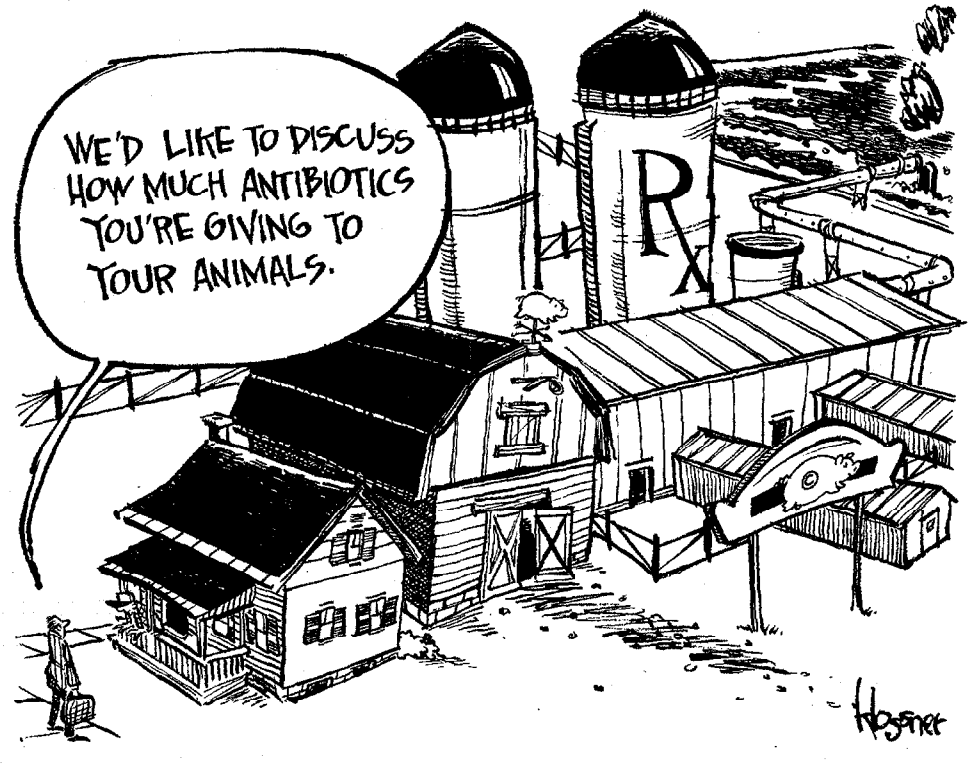
But the Food and Drug Administration is dragging its feet. While it studies the problem, how many diseases will become untreatable?

We must act now.

WHO TO CONTACT

Jane Henney, M.D., Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 1471
Rockville, MD 20857
Fax: 301-443-3100

Or send an email or fax from the UCS website at *www.ucsusa.org/act.*



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Organic Farming

continued from front page

Bt-producing bacteria. Every cell of the potato plant produces Bt, so the beetles are exposed for the entire growing season. Since resistance is a function of length of exposure, the transgenic application of the Bt will result in resistance; it's simply a matter of time. Whereas using Bt as one of several tools is a way to preserve it so that my kids, when they go into farming, will be able to use it.

Unfortunately, the EPA acted hastily in approving not only Bt potatoes, but Bt corn and Bt cotton. For example, Bt pollen from corn going offsite, landing on milkweed, and poisoning the Monarch butterflies—that should have been studied before letting these crops into the environment.

In the past, organic farmers have worried about chemical pollution from drifting pesticide sprays. The risk of genetic pollution is worse. Imagine if an organic corn grower was growing his crop near a transgenic corn grower and the pollen blew onto his farm. It could not only disqualify his corn crop for that year, it could disqualify his farm.

There's an effort under way to try to have 30 percent of US farm production organic by the year 2010, which seems like a pretty tall order. But there are progressive farmers that are now sitting on the sidelines trying to see, "Is the market big enough for me to go in?" It can't be overstated how important it is to purchase organic food, because that is what is going to promote the changeover.

This is only some of our interview with Jim Gerritsen. Hear the rest on the Web at www.ucsusa.org/agriculture.

www.ucsusa.org

Stumped for a gift? Why not give a UCS membership to someone close—a year's worth of invigorating news on the environment, and a chance to be part of the solution! A secure online form on our website makes it easy. Just go to *www.ucsusa.org/give.*

earthwise

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Union of Concerned Scientists

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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
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dialogue

I keep hearing that biotechnology will help reduce world hunger. Is this technology necessary to feed the world?

—Jill Foreman
Albuquerque, New Mexico

No. Today there is abundant food, yet an eighth of the world's population is chronically undernourished. This is primarily for reasons that have little to do with technology, such as lack of income to buy food, inadequate infrastructure like roads to get products to market, and trade policies that disadvantage farmers in the developing world.

A recent study by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization found that growth in global agriculture over the next three decades should be more than sufficient—without genetic engineering—to meet world demand for food. Genetically engineered crops were omitted from this assessment due to ambiguities over the long-term promise, safety, and consumer acceptance of the technology. So far, there is little reason to believe that genetic engineering would be markedly better at improving crops than more proven traditional technologies.

More productive crops are only part of the solution to the world hunger problem. Significant changes are also needed outside of agriculture—such as improving the incomes of the poor in developing countries to enable them to feed themselves.

earthwise

Volume 3 Number 1 WINTER 2000–2001 UPDATES *from the* UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS

Pledge Success

This last year, we asked you to take the Clean Car Pledge. Your response was terrific! By August, nearly 15,000 people had sent us postcards or emails pledging that their next vehicle would meet a clean car standard.

Your pledges have been extraordinarily effective.

We launched the Clean Car Pledge to show California regulators there's a market for clean cars. It worked! In September, the California Air Resources Board held firm on its zero-emission-vehicle program, despite strong industry opposition. This program requires automakers to market advanced vehicles like battery-electric, hybrid-electric, and fuel-cell cars.

We're also using your pledges to send a message to Detroit that consumers want better environmental performance from vehicles. We'll hold General Motors and Ford to their promises of better fuel economy, while pushing the other auto companies to join the race for the environmental mantel.

The result of both efforts will be cleaner vehicles—and cleaner air—in California and nationwide.

What next? We hope to persuade lawmakers to provide incentive packages to bring the price of advanced technology vehicles into the range of more buyers.

close to home

Organic Farming

Organic farmers are the foremost practitioners of the sustainable agricultural methods UCS advocates. Jim Gerritsen, a UCS activist, farms potatoes organically on Wood Prairie Farm in Maine. He talked with us one afternoon to explain why he uses organic methods.

Megan Gerritsen

It's obvious when children are involved. When we're tending the crop, our kids—who are 10, 6, and 2 years old—are out in the field with us all the time. We don't hesitate to take them with us because there are no lethal chemicals in the soil or on the foliage.

Organic farming is not old-fashioned farming, but it has a deep respect for the traditions of agriculture. For example, rotation of crops—you want to move the fields around to try to fool the insects.

We've got a four-year rotation. Three of the years the fields are adjacent. In the fourth year (this year), we jump across the road. Between this year's potatoes and last year's, we've got woods and a pond—pretty big obstacles for the Colorado Potato Beetle, which is the bane of potato production. Well, this year (and four and eight years ago), we did not need to use any insecticide for the beetle.

In a typical year, we may need to use Bt, or *Bacillus thuringiensis,* a naturally occurring pesticide, which goes after the Colorado Potato Beetle. It's a valuable tool to organic farmers. But we prefer to not use it, when we can get away with it. That allows beetles blown in by the wind, beetles that may have never been exposed to Bt, to crossbreed with beetles that had not been killed by previous Bt applications. The crossbreeding weakens their ability to develop resistance. That's a responsible way of using Bt.

Now compare the transgenic application of Bt, which Monsanto has gene-spliced into the potato plant from

continued on back page

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ON A PERSONAL NOTE

from the Executive Director

Protecting Our Health

Howard Ris checks out a fuel-cell truck.

As the end of the year approaches, I find myself thinking about what the new year will hold. During the next year, UCS will highlight two new initiatives of vital importance to our health and that of our children and grandchildren.

As teens, my daughters aren't as vulnerable to infection as they were when they were younger. But when they do get sick, I want to know that effective medicines are available to treat them. Today, some bacteria that once were susceptible to antibiotics have become resistant to them, because antibiotics are often being grossly overused—especially on animal farms. UCS is launching a campaign to stop this misuse.

Our first task is to put on the record the actual quantity of antibiotics used in livestock production. Amazingly, no agency tracks these numbers. At the same time, we'll press the new Congress and administration to preserve antibiotics important for human medicine by stopping factory farms from using these essential drugs as growth promoters. The alert on the facing page shows how you can help.

UCS will also be pushing to clean up heavy trucks and buses. Diesel tailpipe exhaust has been linked to lung cancer, pneumonia, chronic bronchitis, heart disease, and asthma. Children are especially vulnerable because their lungs are still developing. And many are exposed daily whenever they ride the school bus.

The EPA and some state and city governments have begun to realize that diesel engines need to be made cleaner. That's a great idea for long-haul trucks, but buses can do better. Alternative fuels like natural gas and advanced technologies like hybrid and electric engines are far better solutions in cities, where diesel emissions are concentrated. UCS will work to convince school and transit districts to choose the cleanest alternatives when they buy new buses and to persuade governments at all levels to offer them incentives to make the right choices for our lungs.

As these campaigns develop, we'll keep you posted and continue to ask for your help in protecting everyone's health.

Howard Ris

UCS in the news

When a coalition of consumer and environmental groups discovered a potentially allergenic form of genetically engineered corn in Taco Bell taco shells, they brought in UCS to talk about the scientific implications. The corn is not approved for human consumption. Its presence in the taco shells was subsequently confirmed, triggering a product recall. Throughout this incident, UCS scientists served as experts for the media.

"This is a potential allergen that is illegally on the market," said Jane Rissler, a UCS senior staff scientist, on the **CBS Evening News** when the news first broke.

When Kraft Foods announced a recall of the tacos, the ***Washington Post*** quoted Rissler: "Instead of being in denial, federal agencies should have been developing models and protocols for predicting allergenicity [in biotech foods] ... Concerns about this came up 10 years ago, but here we have a problem with a possible allergen in the food supply now and we don't have those models or protocols."

"It's significant that a major food company is recognizing that the regulatory scheme at FDA is weak," Rissler later said in an interview with the **Associated Press.**

Margaret Mellon, director of the UCS Food and Environment Program, advocated a thorough investigation of the incident. In the ***New York Times,*** she said: "You can't identify a solution until you have a better understanding of the problem."

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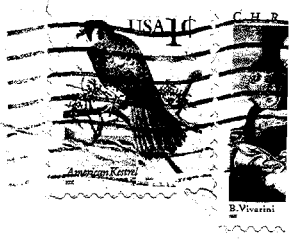

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